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**CONTACT:**

Angie Dye (DMD), 317.327.6709  
Ruth Ann Walker (Warren Twp.  
Development Assoc.), 317.894.8765

City of  
**Indianapolis**  
Bart Peterson, Mayor



## ***City, local stakeholders address eastside economic development***

INDIANAPOLIS – City officials, community leaders and area real estate professionals are seeking to change the perception that the eastside is a bad place to do business. The eastside economic development work group is actively tackling a variety of issues affecting its community and will host an **Eastside Economic Development Forum from 7 – 8:30 p.m. on October 24 at the Community Life Center, 10800 E. Washington Street.**

The work group has collaborated with citizens, neighborhood organizations and merchants with an eye toward revitalization of the township. Since March, the group has discussed such topics as the use of property tax incentives and the importance of grassroots involvement by residents.

“Rather than lamenting the businesses that departed a year ago, or more, we’re discussing ways to draw attention to the area’s current expansions,” Mayor Bart Peterson said. “With the creation of this community-driven group, bringing all of the local stakeholders together, we are laying the foundation for a healthy and sustainable future for the eastside of Indianapolis.”

Some of the expansions on the city’s eastside include Mid America Clinical Laboratories’ upcoming move to a 100,000 square-foot renovated former warehouse on North Shadeland and Cisco Companies’ decision to relocate its operation to the vacant Builders Square near Eastgate Mall.

A series of meetings with Indianapolis-area developers focused on the myths and realities of the eastside’s economic climate. Information collected in these meetings will result in a marketing piece highlighting the benefits of the eastside.

“Unfortunately, positive developments in the area, such as the recent openings of Home Depot, Ritter’s Frozen Custard and Kroger’s multi-million dollar expansion at 38<sup>th</sup> Street and Post Road, have been overshadowed by the failures of national big-box chains and past retail departures,” said Melina Kennedy, the city’s director of economic development. “We are actively working to change that.”

The group also focuses on neighborhood clean-up efforts, the City’s ongoing commitment to improved code enforcement, and business-to-business peer pressure to improve the look of the township.

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Department of Metropolitan Development  
Public Information Office

2001 City County Building  
200 East Washington Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

[317] 327 6709  
[fax] 327 5858  
[TDD] 327 5186  
indygov.org

“Code enforcement serves as an important component of economic revitalization,” says Jeff Bennett, Warren Township Administrator. “Appearance matters greatly when it comes to attracting new businesses to the area.”

To serve as a one-stop-shop for potential developers, the group will inventory vacant buildings and available land, as well as compile up-to-date demographic information.

“It’s important to know what we have available and what we have to offer, economically speaking” says Ruth Ann Walker, a director of the Warren Township Development Association and work group participant.

“Vacant big boxes lend themselves to a number of creative uses: light manufacturing, assembly plants, distribution facilities, back offices or call centers,” says Walker. “We’re optimistic that our ability to partner with the City will continue the positive trend of the past several months and lead to more business openings and more expansions.”

The Eastside Economic Development Forum will consist of a panel of representatives from the Department of Metropolitan Development, Department of Public Works, Health and Hospital Corporation, MSD of Warren Township and Simon Property Group. After a brief presentation outlining the group’s progress, the general public will have the opportunity to participate in an open forum. For more information, contact Jeff Bennett at 327-5566.